DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 177 CG 017 449

AUTHOR Kanefield, Linda
TITLE The Relationship of Family and Work Roles to Depression: Dual-Working Couples.
PUB DATE 9 Apr 83
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (Philadelphia, PA, April 6-9, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Depression (Psychology); *Dual Career Family; *Family Role; Job Performance; Job Satisfaction; Role Perception; *Sex Differences; Spouses; Stress Variables

ABSTRACT

In a study to explore the relationship of family and work roles to depression in dual career couples, 69 couples, in which both spouses worked full-time outside of the home and had at least one child under 18 years of age, completed the self-report Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D), and a questionnaire assessing work and family roles, life satisfaction, responsibilities, perceptions of spouse, and demographic data. An analysis of the results showed that no significant differences in depression scores existed for either men or women, although men did score higher than women. The women in this sample were generally as depressed as other samples using the CES-D scale, while the men were more depressed than men in other samples. Both spouses wanted women to spend more time in domestic roles, and women, but not their husbands, wanted men to contribute more. Both spouses confirmed the obligatory nature of men's work outside the home and the obligatory correlary of women's parenting and domestic roles. Women who felt they had their husband's cooperation and assistance were more satisfied at their jobs. Women, more than men, juggled commitments in the roles of home manager and worker to accommodate limitations of time and energy. Men who undertook activities that were traditionally in women's domain were more depressed than men who spent less time in home management. Women who were dissatisfied either as home managers or as workers had higher depression scores. (BL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED244177

The Relationship of Family and Work Roles to Depression: Dual-Working Couples

Linda Kanefield

University of Massachusetts/Amherst

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Linda Kanefield
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at Eastern Psychological Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 9, 1983.

CG 017449

Introduction

Technological advances and industrialization that moved production from cottage activities to large factories and business enterprises, the advent of reliable birth control that afforded women greater freedom from childrearing, the contemporary women's movement that supported women's efforts to extend their strengths and interests beyond child-rearing and the home, and more recently, economic necessity, have all contributed to the increasing number of families where both husband and wife work full-time outside the home. These changes have not been without stress for the women and men involved in a transition from roles and responsibilities traditionally circumscribed on the basis of sex, to possibilities of more nontraditional arrangements of family and work responsibilities.

These transitions within the family and the concommitant stress experienced by individuals converge with current theories about women and depression. Higher rates of depression for women have led researchers to hypothesize connections between a woman's traditional role and her depression. As it becomes clear that women's evolving family and work roles cannot be independent of the roles of the men with whom they live and work, it is increasingly important to examine the relationships between women, men, social roles, and depression.

Purpose

This study emerges, then, from the psychological and sociological literatures on women and depression and on dual working couples which jointly suggest that an individual's experience of depression is related to her/his social roles. As the number of married full-time employed

parents increases, so does the need to identify specific aspects of family and work life that may account for the general finding that marriage is more stressful for women even when, and perhaps because, women are working (Gove, 1979; Pearlin, 1975). In order to illuminate the complex relationships between work and family roles and depression, I take the position that a woman's roles in family and work, as well as the stress she experiences, are related to her husband's experience of work and family roles and stress.

Therefore, this investigation was designed to explore the relationships, and the possibly different relationships for women and men in dual working couples, between work and family roles and an individual's self-reported depression. How do husbands and wives manage the amalgam of tasks and responsibilities inherent to their positions as parents in dual working families? How does this management affect women and men differently? What are the connections between occupational and domestic roles, and how do they differ for women and men in these couples? What is the nature of self-reported depression in relation to work and family roles? How do profiles of depression differ for the women and men in this dual working sample?

In order to answer these exploratory questions, the following topics were covered:

1. Sociodemographic description of sample
2. Dimensions of roles in family and at work
3. Relationships between roles for women and men
4. Relationships between dimensions of roles for women and men
5. Relationships of roles within couples
6. Distribution of depression within this sample

7. Depression within couples

8. Relationships of roles and dimensions of roles to depression

Subjects

Participants were 69 married couples, in which both husband and wife worked full-time outside the home, and who had at least one child 18 years old or younger living at home. Both husband and wife participated in the study.

During the period from April to July of 1981, 578 contacts were made by letter and phone calls to individuals who might fit the necessary criteria. Participants were recruited through names on randomly selected pages of a local street directory, through letters sent to women employees at a major state university, through local school systems, and by word of mouth. The majority of couples who eventually participated (94.2%) lived in the area around Amherst, Massachusetts, a college town; the remaining four couples resided in suburbs of a major city on the east coast.

Procedure

Husbands and wives separately completed the identical questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to assess work and family roles; the family role consisted of parent, spouse, and home manager roles, and the work role consisted of only the single role of worker in a full-time occupation outside the home.

Four specific aspects of the lives of dual working parents were examined:

1. Satisfaction, emotional involvement, time spent, and time change desired in each role

2. Relative distribution of responsibilities in household management and care, child care, and settlement of emotional disagreements
3. Individual's perception of her/his spouse's satisfaction, emotional involvement, and time spent, in comparison to her/himself
4. Demographic information including age, years married, number and age of children, hired help for child or home care, job and education information

The dependent variable, depression, was measured by the 20 item self-reported Center for Epidemiologic Studies - Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977). The CES-D Scale was chosen for its utility for determining current levels of depression in the general population, and its extensively documented use which permitted comparison of the distribution of depression in the present sample to distributions in other samples.

Findings and Implications

The data analysis for this study was divided into a number of broad steps. I began with descriptive analyses and straightforward distribution of questionnaire responses, focused on correlational and regression analyses that addressed the relationships between family and work roles and depression, and ended with further descriptive analyses as the results raised new questions.

Because this study was exploratory in nature, and because a report of the multitude of specific findings would be prohibitive for this presentation, I will emphasize the general trends that emerged from these couples' responses, and then present some of the results that led me to draw these patterns.

In light of consistent findings that women are more depressed than men (Weissman and Klerman, 1977; 1980; Radloff, 1975), it is striking that in this sample, there was no significant difference in the CES-D scores of women and men, although men did score higher than women (men, $\bar{X}$ = 9.8; women, $\bar{X}$ = 8.6). Futhermore, the women in this sample were generally as depressed as the women in other samples (8.6 vs. 9.4; 9.6) that used the CES-D Scale, while the men in this sample were significantly more depressed than men in other samples (9.8 vs. 6.8; 6.5). (See Table 1).

Correlational and regression analyses indicated a number of trends evident in these couples:

1. Sensitivity to disagreement within couples around the time spent in domestic roles, where both men and women wanted women to spend more time, and where women, but not their husbands, wanted men to contribute more.
2. Confirmation for the obligatory nature of men's work outside the home and for the correlary obligatory quality of women's parenting and domestic roles.
3. Evidence for the importance of a husband's cooperation for a wife to be satisfied at her job.
4. The notion that women juggled their commitment in the roles of home manager and worker outside the home to accommodate to limitations of time and energy.
5. Evidence that men who undertake activities that were traditionally in women's domain--most specifically, men who spend greater amounts of time managing and caring for their homes--are more depressed than men who spend less time in home management.

Before making links to the relationship between particular roles and depression, the different nature of the roles of parent, spouse, home manager, and worker were examined for women and men. Although the couples in the current study typically reported high levels of satisfaction and emotional involvement in all their roles as parent, spouse, home manager, and worker, differences did emerge between sexes and between roles. Interestingly, many more women than men were satisfied with their jobs ($p \lesssim .05$) and four times as many women as men were dissatisfied in their role as home manager ($p \lesssim .05$). There also seemed to be the greatest disagreement around involvement in the domestic role: men tended to see themselves as equally involved as their wives, while wives saw themselves as more involved than their husbands in that role ($p \lesssim .01$).

The task distribution in this sample was similar to other dual working samples reported in the literature. Despite their full-time employment outside the home, women bore a disproportionate share of child care responsibilities ($p = .000$) and spent much greater time caring for their homes ($p \lesssim .001$) than their husbands did (Bryson, Bryson, & Johnson, 1978; Lopata, 1981), and men spent more hours working at their jobs ($p \lesssim .001$) than their wives did. In general, it appeared that female employment did not necessarily lead to egalitarian role distribution (Szinovacz, 1977; Tryon & Tryon, 1982), a negotiation that, although unbalanced, maximized income, since men earned more than women when they worked outside the home.

Although most people (about 40%) in this sample were basically content with the amount of time they were spending in each of their

work and family roles, there were some changes people who have liked either for the time they spent, or the time their spouses spent, in particular aspects of their lives. If they desired a change in that role, both women and men wanted to spend more time with their children. Although most individuals wanted to spend more time with their spouses, there were considerably more women than men who wished to spend less time in the marital role (15.9% vs. 2.9%). The reason for this discrepancy is not clear, but since this is the one role where men and women reported spending the same amount of time with each other, and it is only role that directly involves the other spouse, this finding raises questions about the different gratifications and difficulties encountered for husbands and wives in that role.

More women than men (45.8% vs. 34.7%) wanted to put more time into domestic care, and more men wished they could cut back on time spent in household care (27.5% vs. 23.1%). It seems that even though women spent much more time than their husbands in this role, they wished they could devote even more time to that aspect of their lives. Of the approximately one half of the people who wanted to change the amount of time they spent at work, somewhat more women than men wanted to work more hours, and slightly more men wanted to work fewer hours.

The largest inconsistencies appeared in the role of home management and care. Approximately two fifths of the men were equally divided on whether they wanted their wives to spend more or less time caring for their homes, while a striking one half of the women wanted their husbands to spend more time there, and almost no women wanted their husbands to contribute less to home care. Since over one quarter of the men wanted to put less time into home care, time spent in this role was particularly

sensitive to disagreement within couples.

An examination of the relationship between roles revealed a number of things about the couples in this sample. First, the strong correlation for women ($r = .40$), but not for men ($r = .13$), between satisfaction as a spouse and satisfaction as a career person, and involvement as a spouse and involvement as a career person ($r = .51$ vs. $r = .15$), suggested that while men worked regardless of their wives' support, women depended to some extent on their husbands' assistance for this job satisfaction. Or, it may more simply be that women who were satisfied away from home, were also more generally happy inside the home. Men, but not women, reported a strong relationship ($r = .41$ vs. $r = .10$) between satisfaction as home manager and as worker outside the home, providing evidence for the notion that there were greater similarities for men, between the tasks and responsibilities of household care and those responsibilities in their jobs than there were for women, who handled most of the more menial household tasks. In addition, for men, but not for women, parental and marital satisfaction was strongly related ($r = .66$ vs. $r = .39$). This indicated that men seemed to experience a more unified family role that included father and husband, while the two roles of mother and wife were more distinct, with separate contentments and frustrations, for women.

While men's emotional involvement at work was not influenced by their involvement as home managers, women who were more invested in their jobs were less invested at home, and in fact, spent less time caring for their homes when they were more involved at work. Evidently, when a woman's emotional burden reached its limits, a woman chose between her household and her job responsibilities.

Although there were few significant relationships between time spent in one role and time spent in another role, the relationships that emerged further implied that parental and marital roles functioned as a more unitary role for men than they did for women. The greater time women spent as parent and home manager, as well as the more varied and heavier responsibilities she faced in those roles, made them more distinct for her. These combined findings seem consistent with previous research that demonstrated that women, but not men to the same extent, were adding new responsibilities to their already full load as mothers and wives, and therefore experiencing greater overload as a result of demanding work and family roles (Johnson & Johnson, 1981; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Lawe & Lawe, 1980).

The combined results of correlational and regression analyses pointed to the importance of the roles of home manager and worker outside the home for triggering depression. For a man, dissatisfaction in his job (Beta = .40, $p \leq .01$), or a large amount of time (large in comparison to other men in the present sample, although not in comparison to women) spent caring for his home (Beta = .33, $p \leq .05$) increased the likelihood of depression. For a women, dissatisfaction either as home manager (Beta = .30, $p \leq .05$) or as a worker (Beta = .38, $p \leq .05$) at her job were predictive of an elevated depression score.

A closer look at the correlates of these four roles bolstered the position that what goes on within the marital couple bears on the individual's depressive experience. A man's job dissatisfaction predictive of his depression, was associated not just with his own dissatisfaction in the roles of parent ($r = .29$, $p \leq .05$) and home manager ($r = .41$, $p \leq .01$), but also with his satisfaction or involvement

compared to his wife ($r = -.66$, $p \leq .01$). If either spouse saw the wife as more satisfied ($r = -.66$, $p \leq .01$), ($r = .28$, $p \leq .05$) or spending more time at her job than her husband did at his ($r = -.31$, $p \leq .01$), a man was likely to be dissatisfied at work.

That the time a man spent caring for his home was so linked to his depression is of special interest because it seems to be the aspect of these couples' lives where the greatest strain occurred. Although the time a man spent at home was not actually related to a woman's depression, women (50.7%) generally wanted their husbands to spend more time contributing to household care and management. And, the more satisfied a particular woman was with the amount of time her husband spent in home care, the more likely she was to be satisfied with her job ($r = .25$, $p \leq .05$), and thus indirectly, less likely to be depressed. However, as men spent more time in their homes, and were more likely to share more of the tasks women typically handled, they experienced more emotional stress. These men also tended to have wives who were less emotionally involved as a spouse ($r = .28$, $p \leq .05$), and more involved at work than their husbands ($r = -.23$, $p \leq .05$), highlighting the costs encountered by these men when their wives expected them to share the burden of working full time, raising a family, and managing a household.

In fact, the more involved a woman saw her husband in comparison to herself in their role as home manager, the greater was her satisfaction at work ($r = .27$, $p \leq .05$), which decreased her likelihood of being depressed. Also linked to a woman's job satisfaction were her satisfaction and involvement in the marital role ($r = .40$, $p \leq .01$; $r = .41$, $p \leq .01$). Further support for the necessity of her husband's cooperation of her working outside the home came from the fact that women who were dissatisfied

at work were likely to want their husband's to spend more time in all family roles as parent, spouse, and home manager ($r = .25$; $r = .24$; $r = .25$, $p \leqslant .05$), and had husbands who wanted them to spend more time in the marital relationship ($r = .22$, $p \leqslant .05$). A woman's dissatisfaction at home, which was also highly predictive of her depression, was related both to her own dissatisfaction as parent ($r = .25$, $p \leqslant .01$) and spouse ($r = .20$, $p \leqslant .05$), and to her husband's dissatisfaction at his job ($r = .22$, $p \leqslant .05$).

In one of the few studies in the literature that looks at both men and women, Rosenfeld (1980) reported support for a sex-role explanation of depression when she found that less traditional men were significantly more depressed than less traditional women. (Her definition of less traditional was defined by "nontraditional division of labor" which she did not adequately detail.) This study's results were similar to Rosenfeld's because both investigators indicated a reversal in sex differences in depression, and found these differences to be related more to changes away from men's tradition roles, than to changes in women's roles. She suggested, and the present sample confirmed, that men who undertake activities that were traditionally in women's domain, are likely to experience increased psychological stress. While women's employment outside the home has been an established pattern for two decades, men's shared activities in the home is only very recent, and these studies may capture the price attached to pioneer role changers.

The costs and benefits of dual working couples are complex. On the one hand, working women add more meaningful dimensions to their lives and money to the household; on the other hand, the gain is mediated by lower status jobs, pressure to continue to manage most

household and child care activities even while working, and societal and personal concerns about leaving children to work outside the home. While men may benefit from increased income, the opportunity to participate more actively in childrearing, and the greater satisfaction his wife may experience in her life from working, he too may be taxed by physical and emotional overload, decreased supportive emphasis on his occupational achievements within the family and by taking less challenging jobs (Gilbert, 1980). Although the emotional cost for men in dual working families have not been previously documented, the present study gives evidence that it exists.

Implications and Conclusions

Although much recent literature (Goldman and Ravid, 1980; Gove, 1972; Lester, 1979; Radloff, 1980; Brown, 1978; Weissman and Paykel, 1974) has focused on women and their experience of depression, this study draws attention to the interconnections between women and men within a married dual working couple, and their individual reports of depression. There was considerable evidence that a nontraditional lifestyle affects women and men differently, both in terms of the particular meanings of the roles of parent, spouse, home manager, and worker for them, and also in their individual experience of depression.

Even though there was no relationship between the levels of depression within a particular couple, there was much evidence that an individual's, as well as her or his spouse's satisfaction, emotional involvement, and time spent in work and family roles differentially affects depression for women and men. This study demonstrated that women's changing roles impact on both members of a dual working couple, and emphasizes the need

for future research to recognize the interrelationships between the experiences of husbands and wives as more families struggle with the obstacles and advantages in dual working lifestyles.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution CES-D Scale: Comparisons With National Health Survey Samples

	% Scoring 16+	% Scoring 15-	Range	$\bar{x}$	SD
Present Study					
Men (ages 29-62)	18.8	81.2	0-30	9.8	7.24
Women (ages 25-57)	13.0	87.0	0-41	8.6	7.60
National Survey Currently Married					
Men (ages 25-74)	--	--	0-60	6.8	6.8
Women (ages 25-74)	--	--	0-56	9.4	8.9
Currently Employed					
Men (ages 25-74)	--	--	0-60	6.5	6.3
Women (ages 25-74)	--	--	0-56	9.6	9.0

References

Arieti, S. & Bemporad, S. Severe and Mild Depression: The Psychotherapeutic Approach. Basic Books, NY, 1978.

Brown, G. W. & Harris, T. Social Origins of Depression. A Study of Psychiatric Disorder in Women. Free Press, New York, 1978.

Bryson, R., Bryson, J., & Johnson, M. Family size, satisfaction, and productivity in dual-career couples. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 1978, Vol. 3, (1), 67-77.

Gilbert, L. "The Men in Dual-Career Families--Do The Benefits Outweigh The Costs?" Paper presented at APA, Montreal, Canada, Sept. 1980.

Goldman, N. & Rand, R. Community surveys: Sex differences in mental illness. In Guttentag, Salasin, Belle, Mental Health of Women. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

Gove, W. Relationship between sex roles, marital status, and mental illness. Social Forces, 1972, Vol. 51, 34-43.

Gove, W. Sex differences in the epidemiology of mental disorder: Evidence and explanations, p. 23-68. In Gender and Disordered Behavior: Sex Differences in Psychopathology, Gomberg, E. and Franks, V., Editors, Brunner/Mazel, NY, 1979.

Holahan, C. & Gilbert, L. Conflict between major life roles: Women and men in dual career couples. Human Relations, 1979, Vol. 32, (6), 451-467.

Johnson, C. & Johnson, F. Parenthood, Marriage, and Careers: Situational Constraints and Role Strain. In F. Pepitone-Rockwell (Ed.), Dual Career Couples. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981.

Klerman, G. & Weissman, M. Depressions among women: Their value and causes. In Guttentag, Salasin, Belle, The Mental Health of Women. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

Lawe, C. & Lawe, B. The balancing act: Coping strategies for emerging family lifestyles. In F. Pepitone-Rockwell, Dual Career Couples. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981.

Lester, D. Sex differences in suicidal behavior. In Gender & Disordered Behavior (Ed.) by Gomberg and Franks. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979.

Lopata, H., Barnewolt, D., & Norr, K. Spouses' contributions to each other's roles. In F. Pepitone-Rockwell, Dual Career Couples. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981.

Pearlin, L. Sex roles and depression. In Datan, N. and Ginsberg, L., Life-Span Developmental Psychology. Academic Press, New York, 1975.

Radloff, L.S. The CES-D scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population. Applied Psychological Measurement, 1977, 1 (3), 385-401.

Radloff, L. Risk factors for depression: What do we learn from them? In Guttentag, Salasin, Belle, The Mental Health of Women. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

Radloff, L. Sex differences in depression: The effects of occupation and marital status. Sex Roles, 1975, 3, 249-266.

Rosenfeld, S. Sex differences in depression: Do women always have higher rates? Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 1980, 21, (1).

Szinovacz, M.E. Role allocation, family structure, and female employment. Journal of Marriage and The Family, 1977, 39, 781-791.

Tryon, G.S. & Tyron, W. Issues in the lives of dual-career couples. Clinical Psychology Review, 1982, Vol. 2, 49-65.

Weissman, M.M., & Klerman, L. Sex differences and the epidemiology of depression. Archives of General Psychiatry, 1977, 34, 98-115.

Weissman, M.M., & Paykel, E.S. Depressed Woman: A Study of Social Relationships. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1974.